II 62—9

7/12

Gujarat Relief Fund

1. Donation ? Sat Aug 47
2. Letter from Mrs V. L Pandit from Moscow
3. Letter from Rajkumari (31.1.48)
4. Letter from Asaf Ali
5. Letter from P.M.

Vallabhbhai & Jawaharlal

46-47

COPY.

18~~th~~ Hardinge Avenue,
New Delhi.
22nd July 1946.

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sending you a sheaf of papers:

Copy of two letters which I have addressed to the Congress Premiers;

Copies of letter from Viceroy and my answer;

Letter with its enclosure from Col. Gill;

Copy of a letter to Bardoloi.

About the Sikh position, I have definitely told Gill to approach you and he has agreed to do so. The kind of assurances he wants from Congress have partly been given by you and me, and for the rest, I do not think, especially at the present moment, that it will be desirable for us to make any public statements. However, it is for you to judge. I have met Partap Singh also and heard his tale of woe. He showed me the telegram you have sent him. About Gill, I am afraid that he is totally inexperienced in political matters and he is thinking only of Panthic unity. He is very able and he created a good impression upon me, but he has a reputation of unreliability.

I saw the Viceroy today and we talked about a variety of subjects. About Sikhs he said he was perfectly prepared to give them another chance of election, but somebody must approach him and ask him for it. I asked him as to who was to approach him. He wasn't quite clear as he said there were so many groups among the Sikhs. Any way he is quite willing to fix another election up and I believe he has written to the Governor about it. I am likely to see some people in Lahore on my way to Kashmir. I shall mention this fact to them, You can also take such steps as you consider proper.

I spoke to the Viceroy about Sind also. He agreed that many mistakes have been made, but he cast the blame more on the Speaker than on Mudie. However, he said that he would try to have an early session of the Sind Assembly arranged. His only difficulty was, he said, the month of Ramzan.

I had a telegram from Jairamdas today asking what they should do. He said that a majority of the members of the Assembly were prepared to declare themselves in writing against grouping. I have suggested to him that these members should so declare themselves and ask for an early session of the Assembly for this purpose as well as for a no-confidence motion against the Provincial Government.

You will see what I have written to the Congress Premiers. I need not add anything to it.

The Viceroy's letter and my reply to it will speak for themselves. I think we should have an early meeting of the Working Committee to consider all these vital problems before us. I wired to Bapu inquiring what date and place would suit him. He has said Wardha after 7th August. So I am thinking of fixing the 8th August at Wardha.

p..2

The Expert Committee has done some good preliminary work here. Munshi will tell you about it. I am thinking of calling the next meeting of this Committee in Bombay on the 12th August immediately after the Working Committee.

My provisional programme is: Kashmir 24th to 27th or 28th, then back to Allahabad via Delhi reaching Allahabad on the 30th. I shall remain there for a few days and then go to Wardha.

I am writing to Maulana Azad also in regard to some of the subjects mentioned above and sending him copies of my correspondence with the Viceroy. I am not sending these or mentioning anything about them to anyone else. You will, of course, when you have the chance, show them to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,
sd/- Jawaharlal.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,
68 Marine Drive, Bombay.

P.S. I saw Rajendra Babu today. He was on his way to Pilani.

COPY.

No.592/47. Personal & Confidential.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.
22nd July 1946.

Dear Pandit Nehru,

I declared my intention of replacing the present Caretaker Government of officials by an Interim Coalition Govt. as soon as possible; and am now putting to you as President of the Congress and to the President of the Muslim League the proposals set out below:

2. I think you will probably agree with me that our negotiations both this summer and last year were hampered by the attendant publicity. I am therefore seeking your cooperation in conducting at any rate the preliminary stages of the negotiations on a strictly personal and secret basis between myself and the two Presidents. I very much hope that you will prevent this correspondence being known to or discussed in the Press until we have seen whether we can find some basis of agreement. I realise of course that you will have at some stage to secure the approval of your Working Committee; but I believe it will be best to try and reach some basis of agreement between ourselves as a first step. I propose the following for your consideration:

(a) the Interim Govt. will consist of 14 members;
(b) six members (to include one Scheduled Caste representative) will be nominated by the Congress;
five members will be nominated by the Muslim League.
Three representatives of Minorities will be nominated by the Viceroy. One of these places will be kept for a Sikh. It will not be open to either Congress or the Muslim League to object to names submitted by the other Party, provided they are accepted by the Viceroy.

(c) Distribution of portfolios will be decided after the Parties have agreed to enter the Govt. and have submitted their names. The Congress and the Muslim League will each have an equitable share of the most important portfolios.

(d) The assurance about the status of the Interim Govt. which I gave in my letter dated 30th May to Maulana Azad will stand.

3. I would welcome a convention, if freely offered by the Congress, that major communal issues can only be decided by the assent of both the major Parties, but I have never thought that it was essential to make this a formal condition since in fact a Coalition Govt. could work on no other basis.

4. I sincerely trust that your Party will agree to cooperate in the administration of India on the above basis, while the work of constitution-making proceeds. I am confident that this will be of the greatest possible benefit to India. I suggest that we should not spend further time in negotiation; but should try out at once a Govt. on the basis proposed above. If it does not work, and you find the conditions unsatisfactory, it will be open to you to withdraw, but I am confident that you will not.

5. Would you be good enough to let me know very soon whether the Congress will enter in the Interim Govt. on this basis? I have written in similar terms to Mr.Jinnah and enclose a copy of my letter to him.

Yours sincerely,
sd/- Wavell.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

COPY.

(Personal & Confidential)

18 Hardinge Avenue,
New Delhi.
23rd July 1946.

I have given careful consideration to your letter of the 22nd July which you gave me yesterday. I agree with you that publicity in the Press or otherwise does not do any good when delicate negotiations have to be carried on. So far as I am concerned, I shall see to it that the Press has no knowledge of it. But it is not possible for me, even as Congress President, to function by myself in such matters without any reference to my colleagues. Inevitably I shall have to consult my colleagues.

This becomes even more necessary because the situation itself has changed in many ways since we discussed these matters and much has happened which has to be taken into consideration in arriving at a decision. You will remember our telling you at our last meeting that it would not be possible to pick up again the old threads where they had been left off. That chapter had come to an end and an entirely new approach would have to be made. Since then a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee has been held and the whole subject reviewed. A new Working Committee (though it has many of the old members in it) has been formed.

Apart from this, our experience of the previous talks has demonstrated that there is little hope of a successful issue along the old line of approach. And even if there was some temporary arrangement, this could not last or be capable of dealing with the urgent problems of the day. The all-India strikes that are taking place are evidence of the tension in the country and the accumulation of many problems whose solution has been postponed for so long. Only a strong Government with clear objectives can deal with this situation effectively. Such a Government cannot be formed in the manner suggested.

You have referred to the letter you wrote to Maulana Azad on 30th May regarding the status of the Interim Govt. The assurances you gave then were very far from satisfying us, but in our urgent desire to find a way out, we did not raise any further objections on this score. You will remember that we have all along attached the greatest importance to what we have called the 'independence in action' of the Provisional Govt. This meant that the Govt. should have perfect freedom and that the Governor-General should function as a constitutional head only. Anything else would be more or less a copy of the Executive Council with, of course, some obvious differences.

It is on the basis of this 'independence in action', and on this basis only, that a satisfactory approach to the problem can be made. Once this is acknowledged and admitted you will find, I think, that other relatively minor issues do not offer much difficulty. That acknowledgment would effect even the formation of the Govt. It would not be proper then for the Governor-General to select representatives of the minorities, as you have suggested in your letter.

This question of the status and powers of the Provisional Interim Govt. has, therefore, be decided first in an unambiguous language. That status does not mean some kind of vague international status but internally - the functioning at home as an independent Govt. though with certain inevitable drawbacks due to the existing circumstances.

I am not writing to you about the other matters mentioned in your letter as those can only be considered after the status and powers have been finally and satisfactorily decided. But I shall have much to say about other matters also at a later stage.

p 2

In view of what I have written above, I am wholly unable to cooperate in the formation of a Govt. as suggested by you. So far as I know the mind of the Congress, they would want the political independence issue settled before they can enter any Govt.

I am going to Kashmir tomorrow morning. On the 29th I shall be passing through Delhi on my way to Allahabad. On the 8th August and subsequent days we are having a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha.

sd/- Jawaharlal Nehru.

His Excellency
Field Marshall Viscount Wavell,
Viceroy's House,
NEW DELHI.

COPY.

(Personal).

Camp: 18 Hardinge Avenue,
New Delhi.

22nd July 1946.

Dear friend,

In regard to the Constituent Assembly, it seems to me desirable that persons elected to it should bring their credentials with them for presentation before the Assembly or some proper authority appointed by the Constituent Assembly. These credentials can take the shape of letters of delegation issued by the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly. This is not a mere matter of form.

We want this Assembly to function as much as possible as an independent sovereign authority and the less it has to do with the Govt. of India apparatus the better. The bringing of the letters of delegation by the members of the Constituent Assembly and their proper presentation to the Chairman would add to the solemnity of the procedure and would emphasize the independence of the Constituent Assembly.

The Viceroy may, of course, issue a summons to the members. If this is done we can treat it as a mere formality, attaching far more importance to our letters of delegation from the Speaker of our own Legislative Assembly.

I would request you to pass on this suggestion to the Speaker of your Legislative Assembly. Such letters of delegation should be issued not only to the members of the Provincial Assembly who have been elected but also to non-members who have been elected.

Yours sincerely,

sd/- Jawaharlal Nehru.

Sent to all Congress Premiers,
and for information to M.Azad and S.Patel.

7

COPY.

(Personal & Confidential).

Camp: 18 Hardinge Avenue,
New Delhi.
22nd July 1946.

Dear friend,

As you know, there has been considerable feeling in Congress circles in regard to the events that took place in August 1942 and subsequently and the official repression that followed. There has been and is a strong popular demand for inquiry and punishment of officials and others who are found guilty of inhuman acts or any activity which normally civilised governments do not indulge in. This matter is continually being raised in Provincial Congress Committees and among Congressmen and the public. Letters are appearing in the Press and recently discussions have taken place in some Provincial Assemblies. I have no doubt that you have had to face this problem from day to day and have given it serious thought. I have been unhappy over the lack of action thus far. Yet I realised the many difficulties in the way and the undesirability of doing something which might distract us for the moment from other vital problems.

During last year I had occasion to discuss this problem several times with the Viceroy. This was always at his instance. We expressed our opposing viewpoints to each other. My own viewpoint was that it was not our desire to punish as such any individual even though such punishment might have been richly deserved. Nor was it my desire to have roving inquiries into past events; but, I told him, that I had no doubt in my own mind from the facts placed before me that there have been numerous cases of inhuman conduct and extreme corruption on the part of many members of the services. Also it was undoubted that there was strong popular feeling on the subject. Because of this it was inevitable that our popular Assemblies should reflect this feeling and our Governments be influenced by it. Quite apart from the question of punishment, it was impossible for us to cooperate in governmental or other work with persons who had been guilty of what we considered inhuman conduct or corruption. We did not desire to discredit any service as a whole or to break up the morale of a service. Nevertheless, even in the interest of morale both of the services and the public, it was necessary that people against whom there was such evidence and so much popular ill-will should be removed from the service. This was the general attitude I took up.

I have now had occasion to have another talk with the Viceroy on this subject. I repeated what I have previously said. The Viceroy was anxious, for reasons which will be obvious to you, that he should protect his services. He said that any roving inquiry would be very undesirable and would lead to a great deal of bitterness. He admitted that much that was very wrong had been done by certain government officials, just as, he added, the people had misbehaved greatly on their part. He appreciated, however, that there was popular feeling on this subject and it was difficult for an officer to continue in his place if there was some evidence of grave mis-conduct against him and popular ill-will. Such an officer, he was of the opinion, might resign.

In view of what I have said above, I suggest to you that you might approach this question in the following manner. There need not be any large-scale or public inquiry, but your Government might inquire into specific and flagrant cases which are wellknown. Such an inquiry can be private. Where your Government is satisfied that there is prima facie

p..2

case of extreme misconduct or corruption, you might take up this case with the Governor and arrange for the retirement from service of such person. It is obvious that a person against whom there is a great deal of popular ill-will should not continue in service. If this method is adopted, it should lead to the purification of the services as well as to soothing public sentiment which has been rightly excited over such matters.

I need not go into any further detail as you will, no doubt, know best how to proceed. I think that there should be no delay about this.

Of course, if you find that there is a very flagrant case of corruption, it is certainly open to you to take such other steps as you like. I am in no way suggesting a limitation of your discretion in such matters. What I have suggested is a quick, smooth, and relatively easy way of dealing with a matter which has long troubled us all.

Yours sincerely,

sd/- Jawaharlal Nehru.

Sent to all Congress Premiers
and for info. to M.Azad and S.Patel.

Lahore, 20.7.46

My dear Punditjee,

I had written the other letter giving a review of the circumstances which led to our boycott for your information and I still think it best to send it. Since then I have read your statements and am deeply grieved at the situation which has caused you such anxiety and inconvenience. But I have to leave that till we meet you next. Meanwhile all I can say is that I have not varied one single jot from the object I have set before me and I have every hope of success. This morning I have sent you a telegram as a result of the Board's decision yesterday and in continuation forward this letter through Gilaniji, who will also personally explain the position.

I enclose a suggested resolution or statement or letter (the stronger the better) to be issued by the Congress, which should enable me to bring all Sikhs alongside the Congress. I respectfully suggest that it will be well worth it, and hope you will be able to agree to it in full, so that even the Sikh extremists cannot disagree. This suggested draft has been agreed to by even the extremist section.

At any rate if you are good enough to agree, I pledge my full support, even to the extent of breaking the Panthic Board and joining the Congress Sikhs. But I am fairly certain that the break can be avoided and all Sikhs brought to the Congress platform. Personally I can come to you any time you want me, that goes without saying, but I want to bring others and break the back of the anti-Congress elements and it is for this that I have been asking

p2

continual support. I repeat that the Congress Sikhs have little hold among the Sikh masses and it is for that reason that I have to be a little soft with the Akalis and achieve my object.

If by some chance this suggested draft cannot be agreed to (which I think will be against our interests) there will be a split. I shall leave the Board and support the Congress. But I feel Akalis will have the better of the Congress Sikhs (with whom I am not really impressed) and I do not want that to happen. It is not due to their personalities but to the Congress prestige that Congress won 10 Sikh seats. Congress is certainly the favourite amongst educated classes, and towns, but among the masses Akalis still hold the sway and it is the masses I want.

So please do be good enough to agree to this and then we can get on. The alternative is not good.

I have to approach you and keep touch direct because lately I have not been impressed by the local Congress leaders and I fear that they may not always give you the correct picture, or rather paint a rosy picture when it is not so rosy.

Gilani Sahib and myself entirely agree in these matters and he will explain anything not explained here. I would have come myself but have full engagements for next few days, so forgive me.

How I wish I could lay bare to you my real heart. Anyhow I pray that you understand me.

With faith in God and the victory of the cause, and among the Sikhs,

Yours affectionately,
sd/- Naranjan Singh Gill.

P.S. You will remember that I pressed for a resolution or something of a definite nature at Bombay. Please do not consider it bargaining but kindly give this little to me now.

Anything further to clarify we can talk at your convenience and await your message before the next step.

COPY.

(1) The Congress considers that injustice has been done to Sikhs in the long term proposals and that the Sikhs are entitled to the same safeguards in Section B, Constituent Assembly, as have been accorded to the two other communities in all-India sphere.

(2) The Congress is of the view and agrees that this injustice is a major issue and will give its full support to the Sikhs for the removal of this injustice.

(3) The Sikhs consider that this injustice should be removed before Section B begins to function and the Congress concurs with this view.

(4) The Congress will either obtain redress of this injustice or give the Sikhs, including Congress Sikhs, full liberty of action in their fight for the removal of this injustice, giving them the most feasible support the Congress deems fit.

(5) In all matters relating to Sikh interests, settlement will be by agreement between the Sikhs and other communities; and in case of no agreement, then by arbitration, whose decision will be binding on all concerned.

(6) In the event of Congress agreeing to the above, the Pritinidhi Panthic Board will (a) join the Constituent Assembly; and (b) stand by the Congress in its struggle for freedom.

sd/- Naranjan Singh Gill
20.7.46

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(1) The Congress considers that injustice has been done to Sikhs in the long term proposals and that the Sikhs are entitled to the same safeguards in Section B, Constituent Assembly, as have been accorded to the two other communities in all-India sphere.

(2) The Congress is of the view and agrees that this injustice is a major issue and will give its full support to the Sikhs for the removal of this injustice.

(3) The Sikhs consider that this injustice should be removed before Section B begins to function and the Congress concurs with this view.

(4) The Congress will either obtain redress of this injustice or give the Sikhs, including Congress Sikhs, full liberty of action in their fight for the removal of this injustice, giving them the most feasible support the Congress deems fit.

(5) In all matters relating to Sikh interests, settlement will be by agreement between the Sikhs and other communities; and in case of no agreement, then by arbitration, whose decision will be binding on all concerned.

(6) In the event of Congress agreeing to the above, the Pritinidhi Panthic Board will (a) join the Constituent Assembly; and (b) stand by the Congress in its struggle for freedom.

sd/- Naranjan Singh Gill
20.7.46

Midnight.
31.1.48.

17

My dear ,

This is just a line of love for you. You & Jawaharlal's burden is terrific now that Bapu has left us. My loyalty is there & you may call on me at any time for any service. You know that. Please take every care of yourself. Your life belongs to the country more than ever before & the people have to be guided.

I am praying that Bapu's supreme sacrifice will make you & the Prime Minister's task easier. Your both are very essential for the well being of the nation.

For me life seems a perfect blank. But I know that to be true to Bapu I may not give way.

God bless you.

Jai Hind

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
1 Aurangazeb Road
New Delhi

J. Nehru

In my opinion, it will be a grave mistake if the Constituent Assembly attempts, in the face of the boycott by the Muslim League, to frame a constitution for the whole of India. If and when the Muslim League boycott becomes an established fact, the Constituent Assembly should have a right to frame a constitution of Independence for all the Provinces, States and Units that may be represented at the Constituent Assembly. This will be an honourable and consistent position for the Constituent Assembly as it is at present constituted. There should be no fear of another or for that matter more Constituent Assemblies sitting, if the attitude advised by me is taken up. No other such Constituent Assembly can sit or function except under the aegis of the British Government whilst the latter functions in India. If the British Government wills it, such other Constituent Assemblies cannot be prevented except through a terrible struggle put up by the Congress, whether of a violent or non-violent nature.

I feel too that the Congress can subscribe to the contention of the British Government about grouping, if it allows Assam and the Frontier Province to secede from the Congress for the purposes of the Constituent Assembly. The Congress has no power save the moral to compel obedience by a Province or a group such as Sikhs.

Srirampur,
17.12.1946.

New Delhi,
30th December 1946.

My dear Vallabh Bhai,

I have just arrived and I send herewith a letter from Pandit with which I was entrusted. I have also a verbal and written message from Gandhiji which I shall communicate later on after I have finished the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee which may be after 5 o'clock. More when we meet.

Yours affectionately
Asaf

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai
Patel,

સુશીલા અને કુંતે (2 ના) આવ્યા.
દર્પણ વાળા ગ્રા. વિકાસ ની મીટિંગ બાબ
અમારે પણ આવા મહત્વ કેટલા ની
કોઈ જાણ વાળ નહિ કરવા. દુઃખ થયું રહીશ.
સાથે પાટી
આપે જાણી સાપ્રતિક નુકસાન
માટે આવ્યો છે. આવક માટે જાણ્યું
C.A વિષે વાત કરી તે ને ગમ્યું
સેમ. આગળ કેવા માટે આ વાત
તેમને માટે ન C.A consultation ધરે.
આવક વધવા પ્રતિવિધિ ના જુદે જુદે
+ પ્રોત્સાહન દરે તે તેમને આપે જે.
સંસ્થા ની શરૂઆત Formula ગણત
બધુ આવકની સાથે માંડશે.

(જી. કે
જાણુ વાળા આદિવાસી
આપ્યા. ધર્મપત્ની

ધર્મપત્ની ને બદલે સંસ્થા
તેમનું કોઈ ના બદલે કોઈ આ
-એવો જાણુ ના સાક્ષાત્કાર.

મને લાગ્યું કે સ્તરે આવવા
જાણે પણ સમય - કાર્યક્રમ મુલાકાત
આપણે તો કે તો વધુ નક્કી થી. રહીશ

મુ. સરદાર શ્રીની સેવામાં,

સરદાર નિરંજન સિંહ ગીલ અને ઠકોર બલવંત સિંહ સાહેબ ગયા. તમારું કાર્ડ તમને આપી દેશે. પણ સ્ટેશન પર જો કોઈ પણ કારણસર કોઈ ન મળવું હોય તો આ કાર્ડ બતાવવું. કોઈ ને કાંઈ પણ પૂછવું નહીં. આ કાર્ડ તમારી ઓળખ માટે છે. તમે ગાડીમાં બેસો કે તરત જ આ કાર્ડ ફાડી નાખજો.

કાકુ તથા આપણા બાકીના માણસો સરદાર પુરાણ લાવશે. મારે રસોઈ માટે કંઈ કહેવા જેવું નથી. પણ એ બધું કામ કંઈ ~~[illegible]~~ ને ઠીક લાગે તે માટે કામ કરવું પડશે. ~~[illegible]~~ તો પછી મારે તો ફક્ત રસોઈ જ કરવાની રહેશે - "ઘરની જ ને વાસણ માંજવાં!"

સરદાર બાપુની ઉપર કાગળ લખવા માટે તો બાર વાગ્યા સુધી રાહ જોવી પડશે.

CONFIDENTIAL

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To

The President,

Indian National Congress.

Dear Friend,

In reference to my letter to Gandhiji, a copy of which was sent to you, he has sent the following reply through two friends, who were deputed to him in this connection. I am hereby informing you that we shall take this stand, advised by Gandhiji on the subject of framing our own constitution and Grouping accordingly.

I hope you will have no difficulty in agreeing to this.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/ Gopinath Bardoloi.

Two Assam Friends Shri Bijayachandra Bhagavathi and Shri Rabendra Mohan Chowdhury saw Gandhiji on the morning of 15-12-'46 on behalf of Shri Bardoloi. They asked him what Assam was to do with regard to the question of grouping. It was a question of life and death for Assam. They did not wish to be grouped with Bengal. Some people told them that they would be helping the League if they stay out. Assam could not be allowed to stand in the way of the progress of the rest of India and so on. They had asked the Working Committee. There did not seem to be any clear guidance from them. So they had come to him for advice. In reply Gandhiji said: "I do not need a single minute to come to a decision for on this I have a mind. I am a Congressman to the very marrow, as I am mainly the framer of the Constitution of the Congress as it stands today. I told Bardoloi that if there is no clear guidance from the Congress Working Committee Assam should not go into the Sections. It should lodge its protest and retire from the Constituent Assembly. It will be a kind of Satyagraha against the Congress for the good of the Congress.

Rightly or wrongly the Congress has come to the decision that it will stand by the judgment of the Federal Court. The dice are heavily loaded. The decision of the Federal Court will go against the Congress interpretation of grouping as far as I can make out for the simple reason that the Cabinet has got Legal advice which upholds their decision. The Federal Court is the creation of the British. It is a packed court. To be consistent the Congress must abide by it whatever it may be. If Assam keeps quiet it is finished. No one can force Assam to do what it does not want to do. It must stand independently as an autonomous unit. It is autonomous to a large extent today. It must become fully independent and autonomous. Whether you have that courage, grit and the gumption I do not know. You alone can say that. But if you can make that declaration it will be a fine thing.

As soon as the time c mes for the Constituent Assembly to go into Sections you will say,"Gentlemen, Assam retires." For the independence of India it is the only condition. Each unit must be able to decide and act for itself. I am hoping that in this Assam will lead the way. I have the same advice for the Sikhs. But your position is much happier than that of the Sikhs. You are a whole province. They are a community inside a province. But I feel every individual has the right to act for himself, just as I have.

Q. But we are told that the framing of the Constitution for the whole of India cannot be held up for the sake of Assam. Assam cannot be allowed to block the way.

A. There is no need to do that. That is why I say I am in utter darkness. Why are not these simple truths evident to all after so many years ? If Assam retires it does not block but leads the way to India's independence.

Q. The League has said that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly cannot be imposed on unwilling units. So if some parts do not accept it, the British Parliament won't accept it.

Gandhiji flared up at this question. "who is the British Government ? If we think independence is going to descend on our heads from England or somewhere, we are greatly mistaken. It won't be independence. We will be crushed to atoms. We are fluctuating between independence and helpless dependence. The Cabinet Mission's plan lies in between. If we act rightly there will be the full-blown flower of independence If we react wrongly the blossom will wither away. Mind you, the League stand-point is quite correct. If they stand out, the ~~Constitution~~ Constituent Assembly cannot impose its constitution on unwilling party. The British Government has no say in the matter one way or the other.

The British cannot interfere with the working of the Constituent Assembly. Supposing the vast majority including the Muslims and others forms a constitution, you can defy the British Parliament if it seeks to interfere. Power is in your

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hands. Some such thing hap ened in Ireland only recently. And De Valera is no non-violent fig ter. The position of India is far bet er than that of Ireland. If we have not the penetration we will lose the advantage we have as it is apparentlt being lost today.

If Assam takes care of itself the rest of India will be able to look af er itself. What have you got to do with the constitution of the Union Government ? You should form your own Constitution of the Union Government. You should form your own constitution. That is enough. You have the basis of a constitution all right even now.

I have never despised the 1935 constitution. It is based on provincial autonomy. It has the capacity for fullest growth, provided the people are worth it. The hill people are with you. Many Muslims are also with you. The remainder can be too, if you act on the square.

You will have to forget petty jealousies and rivalries and overcome your weaknesses. Assam has many weaknesses as it has much strength for I know my Assam. "

"With your blessings we can even go outside the Congress and fight",/put in. the friends

Gandhiji replied that in 1939 when there was the uestion of giving up the Ministry,"Subhas Babu opposed it as he thought Assam's was a special case. I told Bardoloi that there was much in what Subhas Babu had said and although I was the author of that scheme of boycott I said Assam should not come out if it did not feel like it. But Assam did come out. It was wrong."

The friends said,"Maulana Saheb had then said that exception could not be ma e in the case of Assam."

Gandhiji said:"Here there is no question of exception. that Assam rebelled and/civilly. But we have that slavish mentality. We look to the Congress and then feel that if we do not follow it slavishly, something will go wrong with it. I have said that not only a province but even an individual can rebel against the Congress and by doing so save it assuming that he is on the right. I have done so myself. Congress has

not attained the present stature without much travail. I remember in 1918, I think, there was the Peovincial Conference of the Congress workers of Gujerat at Ahmedabad. The late Abbas Tyabjee Saheb was in the Chair. All the old guards were there. Ali brothers had not yet joined hands with me fully then, as they did later on. The late Shri Patel was there. I moved the non-co-operation resolution. I was a non-entity then. A constitutional question arose. Could a Provincial Conference anticipate the decisions of the Congress ? I said, "Yes". A Provincial Conference and even a single individual could anticipate the Congress for its own benifit. In spite of opposition of old hands, the resolution was carried. That paved the way for the Congress to pass a similar resolution at Calcutta. India was dumbfounded at the audacity of a provincial conference passing the revolutionary resolution. (1

"We had formed a Satyagraha Sabha outside the Congress. It was joined by Horniman, Sarojini Devi, Sankerlal, Umar Sobhani, Vallabhbhai, the mischief making Sirdar. I was ill. The Rowlatt Act was Passed. I shook with rage. I said to the Sirdar, I could do nothing unless he helped me. Sirdar was willing. And the rest you know. It was rebellion but a healthy one. We celebrate from the 6th of April to the 13Th. You have all these historical instances before you.

"I have given you all this time to steel your hearts, to give you courage. If you do not act correctly and now, Assam will be finished. Tell Bardoloi I do not feel the least uneasiness. My mind is made up. Assam must not lose its soul. It must uphold it against the whole world. Else I will say that Assam has only manikins and no men. It is impertinent suggestion that Bengal should dominate Assam in any way."

The friends asked if they could tell the people that they have rebelled against the Congress with Gandhiji's blessings.

"Talk of God's blessings," said Gandhiji. "They are much richer. Tell the people even if Gandhi tries to dissuade us, we won't listen."

Sd/ N.K. Basu
15-12-'46.

C/o Mahatma Gandhi,
Sri Srirampur,
Noakhali, 16-12-1946.

Dear Sardar Saheb,

I am writing this under Bapu's instructions. Two ~~gentlemen~~, M.L.As. from Assam, Sjt. Bijaychandra Bhagavat and Shri Mohendra Mohan Chowdhury came, under instructions from Shri Gopinath Bardolai, to interview him on the question of grouping. An authorised version of that interview was handed over to them. Gandhiji wishes that you should secure one copy from Sjt. Bardolai. If you notice any error of fact or of judgment, please communicate it to him, so that necessary corrections can be made.

Yours truly,

Nirmal Kumar Bose

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

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SECRET

17 York Road,
New Delhi.

12 August 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose copy of a letter received from my sister from Moscow, also copy of a telegram from her.

2. You will read what she has written about sending an Ambassador to Iran. I expect to hear officially from the Iranian Government within the next few days. Ali Zaheer's name, you will notice, was suggested by the Iranian Ministers. This was done by them without any instigation on our part. I think that in the circumstances we should choose Ali Zaheer. This would please them and at the same time solve one of our problems. I think it is desirable that No.2 in our Embassy there should be a Hindu. I have in mind a young Hindu in the Secretariat who knows Persian rather well. I forget his name. He is one of the young men chosen by us for the Foreign Service previously.

3. You suggested that it might be desirable to delay this and other appointments for some little time. I think this is difficult now and, having regard to all the circumstances, we should go ahead as soon as possible. I do not think any person will misunderstand or criticise this particular appointment.

4. I shall, of course, wait for the formal communication from Iran. But I should like to be ready by that time. That is to say, I should like to get Ali Zaheer's formal consent. He came to see me in Lucknow today, but I did not mention this matter to him.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal

Encls: 2

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,
1 Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi.

Secret

Copy of a letter from Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit from Moscow dated 8th August, 1947 Addressed to Jawaharlal Nehru.

We are in Moscow. The flight was smooth and pleasant and we are indebted to Capt. Gazdar and his crew for their efficient staff work and for their constant attention to our personal comfort. I hope you will send J.R. D. Tata a letter of appreciation. I have already given one to Capt. Gazdar.

At the air port we were received by the Chef de Protocol in the absence of Molotov who is away. The British Charge and representatives of the Commonwealth nations were present and the Egyptian Ambassador with his entire family! The foreign Press had also come. Everything was quiet and orderly and in direct contrast to Tehran where I was nearly dragged out of the plane by an enthusiastic crowd.

The Chef de Protocol drove me to the house which has been allotted to us where tea had been prepared although it was really dinner time. The whole of Moscow, I am told, is green with envy about this house and foreign correspondents are circulating fantastic stories about my friendship with Molotov and Vishinsky. Not only is there a house - it has also been more or less furnished by orders of the high command and a staff engaged. Apparently this has never happened before in history and the British are sorely put out and are reading all sorts of meanings into it.

But the house is not suited for an Embassy. As the personal residence of a private individual it is rather charming but it is far too small and badly situated in my opinion for an Embassy. There is only one small reception room (about the size of your dining room) and the dining room is smaller still. There are two bedrooms on the first and two on the second floor. Those on the first would have to be used as offices so nobody besides Chand and myself could live in the house. Both rooms as we know them are non-existant and though there is central heating there is no arrangement for hot baths. The Russians, I am told, have an aversion to water! But these details are not for you. Moscow is like the city of the dead. No

sounds anywhere. The streets are so big and roads so wide that even though a great many people are hurrying to and fro, they look curiously empty. Very few cars are visible and those one sees are small and battered and ancient. The key-note of the city is shabbiness - a drab dirty shabbiness which depresses.

We are staying, for the moment, in the Metropole Hotel which is supposed to be the best here. The rooms are dirty - wall paper discoloured - furniture old and broken and the bath rooms worse than the average railway station affair in India. The lavatories are so disgustingly dirty that I cannot even describe them. Food is served in dirty plates by dirty servants. It is all rather bewildering and I shall move into the house as early as possible. At least I can keep it clean.

Food is severely rationed and things like butter and sugar are only allowed on diplomatic ration cards. There are no vegetables and fruits in the market - only meat, fish and black and white bread. But curiously enough there is a supply of rich looking pastries everywhere. I am deliberately putting down these first impressions for you - not in any spirit of discontent or criticism but because I want you to have an idea, while I am here, of my personal reactions to things and events. I do not intend to let my small discomforts - or even large ones - come in the way of my job so don't be afraid on my account.

Unfortunately I fell ill in Tehran and am confined today to bed with a very heavy cold, no voice, and a slight temperature. I am keeping quiet as I have to meet Vishinsky to-morrow and also the Chinese Ambassador who is the Dean of Embassies. My credentials will probably be presented on the 11th August.

I am afraid it will not be possible to arrange a reception on the 15th as we had intended. It cannot be done at the Embassy as we have no staff etc. yet and the estimates given by Hotels here for 200 guests are fantastic and come to over a lakh of rupees in Indian money. After spending all this we should still not be able to have things well done and I have decided that our celebration should be confined to the Embassy officials and staff. I know you will understand. The rouble is 4 as. but its buying capacity in Moscow is one anna!

And now to go back. In Karachi we were received by a Pakistan representative and also by a representative of the Government. (I don't quite understand this arrangement) Some Congress friends and Press men. We had some refreshments and left in about 40 minutes. The night halt was at Basra. The Indian Vice Conncel - a man called Abdullah met us and made all the arrangements necessary for our stay. We left for Baghdad early next morning.

There about 800 Indians in Baghdad and quite a large number are in business and some work in the British Embassy. The Indian Vice Councel is a man who is much disliked by the majority of Indians and many Hindus made specific charges against him and complained that he had given a great deal of assistance to Ispahani when he was here recently. The man is a permanent resident of Baghdad and seemed to me a negligible quantity. There is, however, no doubt that a better and more able and trustworthy man should represent us now. From Baghdad to Tehran was only a short flight. At Tehran I had a big reception. The Indian community consisting only of Sikhs, had turned out in full force and the Iran Government was duly represented. Mr. Hekmat (who came with the delegation to the Asian Conference) was present. He is now a Minister without portfolio in the new Government. We were taken to a hotel outside the city. Besides our rooms a large reception room and private dining room were put at our disposal. The lunch served began with Cavaire and Vodka and consisted of seven very delicious courses - one of them, chicken cooked in saffron was simply wonderful - and the Pilaf which wound up the meal was something out of this world. Each grain of rice was perfect and much better than our best variety. It looked and tasted extremely good. Our hosts were a little disconcerted to find that we did not appreciate the Cavaire and Vodka. It appears Cavaire is an Iranian speciality!

Poor Mrs. Pye is a vegetarian and starved - but she is now making gallant attempts to eat eggs.

After lunch I called on the Foreign Minister - Humayun Jah a very charming man. He lives in a dream palace most beautifully fitted up and entertained me to tea served in priceless porcelain by soft footed servants dressed in well-fitting lounge suits. From there I went to the Prime Minister. He was, unfortunately ill with very high fever and could not see me but I was received

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by the Chef de Protocol and again entertained to tea. I handed your letter to the Chef de Protocol to be given to the P.M. as soon as possible. The P.M. is a very old and sick manand lives in a so-called cottage outside the city. It is very beautiful and is just the sort of place you should have.

That evening the Foreign Minister entertained us at our Hotel. Only a few top officials were present and it was a pleasant evening. Wine flowed in many colour and the menu was elaborate and delicious ending ups with branches of black grapes and peaches and pears. After dinner the Foreign Minister and Mr. Hekmat took me aside and we had a quiet talk for an hour about your letter to the P.M. which, by this time, both of these gentlemen had seen. The letter had been much appreciated by the Iranian Government but they seemed a little surprised that we should wish to exchange representatives on an Ambassadorial level. Hekmat asked if I was sure we meant that and I said obviously we meant what we said. He then enquired if we had a particular name in mind. I replied that I did not know the mind of my Government on this point. The next question rather surprised me as he asked if we might suggest names. These are the ones he mentioned in the same order:

1. Dr. Zakir Hussain.
2. Sir Abdul Kadir.
3. Dr. Syud Hossain.

He then elliminated them on the ground that they were Sunnis and said the basic consideration should be 1. sentimental 2. Political and he would suggest the names of Sir Rustam Masani and Ali Zaheer. I said I would pass on these suggestions to my Government.

After this Hekmat asked me if we knew that Motamedy had done his best to prevent the Iranian delegation attending the Asian Conference. It appears that he is a friend of Liaquat Ali's and a strong pro-Leaguer. I understand he was helpful inmany ways to Ispahani during his recent middle Eastern tour. It was hinted that he was trying to expedite Pakistan representation in Iran so as to have someone there before our man arrived. Hekmat suggested me speed matters up - and the Foreign Minister said the Government reply would be sent to you within a few days. There is no doubt your letter pleased them exceedingly and they are eager to have an Indian Embassy.

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Naqvi - the present Consul attached to the British Embassy was spoken well of by the Iranian officials but the Indians are very dissatisfied with him and begged for his recall. Specific instances of corruption were mentioned to Pye. Whether or not these are true I am not in a position to state but the man is obviously a staunch Leaguer and should have no place in our set up. Ispahani has done some vicious propaganda which has been further helped by Mahmudabad. They have succeeded in making the top Iranians Pakistan conscious. Mahmudabad is returning there in September and intends to spend some time in Tehran.

I was received by the Shah's twin sisters, Princess Asehraf Pahlavi a dazzling and very interesting young woman. The Queen has, I believe, left for good and the Princess does the social duties in her stead.

The Indian community gave an afternoon reception for me at which all the foreign diplomats were present. It was a good function-an address of welcome was read in English to which I replied in Urdu. There were some jais and suddenly one Indian shouted Mr. Jinnah Zindabad - Pakistan Zindabad and this was taken up by quite a few Iranians present. The excitement died down in a moment.

That night the British Ambassador gave a dinner party for me. It was unique because we had dinner in a wonderful tent on the lawn. The inside was done up with Shiraz prints and looked like something out of a story book. I missed you.

The Sikhs came to me in deputation regarding where most of them live. They are eager for a Consul there to protect their interests which they say, Mahmudabad has been trying to sabbotage. I am forwarding their representation separately. From what we were able to gather they certainly have a case and will have to be helped.

The flight from Tehran to Moscow was very interesting though tiring. We stopped at Baku and Stalingrade. We had asked for permission to fly low over Stalingrade but this was refused. Between Stalingrade and Moscow every inch of ground is cultivated and looks green and prosperous. Women do most jobs and we saw only women at the weather stations, refuelling stations etc.

The weather is delightful - we have'nt used even a light coat and the children here are mostly bare bodied and sunburnt. Today is slightly dull but quite warm.

I am seeing Mr. Vyshinsky this afternoon, according to Protocol, to arrange about presentation of my credentials - This will probably take place on the 11th.

Building an Embassy up from scratch is no joke believe me! Everybody here thinks I am very brave. I don't feel that way at all.

P.S.

I have just returned after seeking Vyshinsky. The amount of Protocol and red tape here is unbelieveable. If you could see the instructions I have received regarding the precaution of credentials you would throw a fit. Nothing like it has been heard of outside comic opera.

Vyshinsky was very cordial and said be looked upon me as a friend rather than a new Ambassador. He said there would be no objection my going to U.K. ---" in fact we would ourselves have urged you to go had your own Government not suggested it -" The date for presentation of credentials has not yet been fixed. I have been asked to convey the cordial greetings of Vyshinsky to you personally with the hope that it may be possible for you to visit the Soviet Union in the near future.

I also called on the Chinese Ambassador Dr. Fu who met you in '38 in Paris and again in Chungking. On his advice I have refused to have a Press Conference.

Our staff has been giving some trouble. They are very badly chosen. I can't imagine what Bajpai was doing. Not one of them has any suit and all are in distress and want to go home. The two G men are impossible and they may perhaps be sent home with this letter. Both come under false pretences and thought they were having a joy ride and could go home whenever they pleased. They demand Rs.10/- a day for cigarettes -

complain of everything - are rude in their manners and not at all reliable. I fail to understand why they were chosen. It will be a blow to our prestige to ask for an exit permit but I think it will be better to get rid of them now than risk insubordination and slackness later. Budhi and Haseeb have been wonderful. Everything thrills them and they are gay and cheerful and enjoy the difficulties. The Metro and the moving staircase have provided them with great fun and both are picking up Russian words rapidly. I may ask for two more servants later to serve at table. All Embassies have their own and this is cheaper and better as the Russian servants available are untrained and very expensive.

Through the kindness of the British Charge I have a radio and just listened in to the 9.30 p.m. program from New Delhi. It is 6.40 p.m. here. The news came over clear but faint. It was reassuring to feel we have this link with home.

Kaul is simply super. The boy gives all the time - works like a Trojan and still has time to learn Russian which he is picking up very rapidly. He and Chand are having regular lessons now.

RB/Vol(s) 30-31

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter I have received from Krishna Menon

Yours
Jawaharlal

COPY

47, Strand,
London, W. C. 2.

Personal & Secret.

20th July, 1947.

My dear Jawaharlal,

I feel very guilty about not having written to you since my return. It has been quite impossible to find the time to write to any purpose. On one or two matters about which I consider that you should have detailed submission of information or views from me, I am enclosing separate notes, as may you find it more convenient for your use that way.

1. I have now seen the Prime Minister, Cripps, Listowel, Henderson and leading personalities from political groups. I have also made the contacts in quarters where public opinon tends to be moulded, and must leave results to shape themselves.

2. I set down some impressions.

(a) Jinnah's stock is very much down, very much so, and the last performance about the Governor General is considered laughable. There is no tendency to treat it with regret, but only with redicule. This step of his has done him a lot of harm, just as the corridor speech during Mountbatten's visit turned the scales against him in certain quarters here. The "man in the street" is very anti-League, and overwhelmingly sympathetic to India.

(b) Public opinion has changed almost beyond recognition. The independence of India is accepted, and our association and friendship anticipated without diffidence, but without any sense of "superiority" - in every quarter.

(c) I do not gather the impression that it is British policy to put obstacle in our way. I rather think that Attlee has hopes and desires to be personally in close friendship with you. He is deeply affected by your response on the question of the railways, and I suspect he regards it as a personal achievement.

(d) There is obvious recognition of Congress and its present leadership as being a mature and progressive one with a practical approach !

(e) The propaganda of the States (Zafrulla etc.) has cut no ice. In my opinion it would be a mistake at the present stage to bestow on it importance by chasing it. Zafrulla has certainly made no impression whatsoever on Government circles. While he briefed the Opposition and they went through the motions of stating some of his case, they put no heart into it. In this connection, Lord Simon's silence is significant.

(f) It would be wrong not to be aware ourselves that some quarters think that we shall be in serious difficulties very soon. It is an attitude very similar to what these same quarters felt to the Labour Government.

(g) I was surprise to find the recognition that in the very near future India, that is our India, instead of being influenced by the U.K. would wield considerable influence on this country. This, of course, is not a widely prevalent feeling.

3. (a) I have already renewed contacts with the different Ambassadors and Ministers with a view to keeping our relations alive. I find on my return that this is even more necessary than I had thought was the case when I was in India. There is not much difficulty in dealing with this matter, and at the moment I am continuing the process.

(b) I would like particularly to mention the opportunities created for "taking occasions" with the Arab Ministers. I had what might be called myopposite number in the Arab world here. I know the Ministers of Lebanon and Syria personally, and we met at lunch. They tell me that Emir Abdulla represents nobody but himself. The position appears to be that Transjordan and Saudi Arabia are inclined to be Islamic, being under reactionary rulers. In the other States, Arab nationalism is anti-religious, or non-religious, and even their Legations here are multi-religious in composition. They are rather surprised that in India there is any feeling that the Arab world was jubilant over Pakistan or that it was going Pan-Islamic. The kings everywhere,

apparently, have some such desires. Pakistan would certainly be fraternised with, etc., but the statesmen there realise that India is still India, and I found no change in the attitude of these people to us. I hope to maintain these contacts until such time as some direct relations are established, which one hopes may not be long delayed.

4. I saw the Soviet Ambassador two days after I arrived here, He was almost expecting me. I arranged to take Kaul to see him, as I did not think the arrangements made officially for him to see the Secretary at the Embassy were sufficient. This enabled me to supplement and speed up matters on some of which India House had taken some steps. I want you to feel assured that I have been very careful not to give the feeling that anything was being taken off their hands, and Mr. Vellodi has been kept in close touch. I have also taken instructions from him, and there is no ill-will there. It was, however, necessary in the interests of Mrs. Pandit's arrangements going well to have done something of this kind, as a great many points required attention, as Mr. Kaul found when he came here. I enclose a note giving full details on this matter.

5. There is no news here about the developments of events in India after the date of the passing of the Bill. I wonder whether the Interim Government arrangements have gone through, or if there have been further hitches. What I have to say on the general nature of parliamentary government in relation to the reconstitution of our own administration, I have put down in a separate note for your consideration, if you think it necessary.

6. There are a number of Indians in Paris whose position calls for attention, and they have been constantly writing to me to do something about it and to go and meet them. Something should be done about them, at least to make them feel that they are not forgotten.

I hope you are able to get away for at least three days before 15th August.

With affectionate regards,

Krishna.

23/7/47 .35

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Lord Ismay brought a letter from Prime Ministers Attlee to me. I enclose a copy -

Yours sincerely,

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COPY.

PERSONAL.

10, Downing Street,
Whitehall,

17th July, 1947.

My dear Nehru,

I was glad to see Krishna Menon and to know that you propose that he should be High Commissioner here. He has, of course, many friends over here, and knows the political position very well.

I discussed with him a suggested amendment to the clause in the Bill about the States, but with the best of good will could not accept what was proposed, as it would not in fact have effected what was desired, and might have created a false impression. The Bill passed both Houses this week without any division. All speakers in the Commons, and all but two unimportant Peers gave it warm support, and expressed most cordial good wishes for the success of the new Governments.

I have admired the statesmanship and courage of yourself and Patel. Our warm good wishes go with you in your heavy responsibilities, the weight of which I am in a position to appreciate.

I was very grateful to you for your help over the matter of steel rails for Russia. I am hopeful of getting something useful in the way ot trade in that quarter.

I am a little anxious over the position in Burma. I like Aung San and his colleagues very much, but of course they have not the same resources of experienced personnel as you have in India. I am a little afraid of their feeling obliged to go ahead and take over before they have got an adequate machine of government. They would, I think, be well advised to remain in the Commonwealth at any rate for a period, as we could more easily help them to deal with these problems of defence and finance which are not very easy. I think, however, that they find it difficult to deal with their Left Wing, who have very little knowledge of anything outside their own rather narrow range of experience.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

C.R.Attlee.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Top Secret.

From Indembassy, Moscow
To Foreign, New Delhi

No. 1 T.O.O. 2015
Dated 10th (read. 11th) August 1947 T.O.R. 0730

Follow for Bajpai from Mrs. Pandit.
Your telegram No.6520 of August 9th.

2. Iranian Prime Minister welcomed idea exchange Ambassadors with us. Owing his illness I could not meet him personally but received his message through Foreign Minister Homaionnd Jahandm Rhekmat who is now Minister without portfolio. They enquired if my Government had name in view and asked permission to make suggestions. Several names proposed by them and eliminated. Finally Ali Zaheer mentioned as choice likely to satisfy Iran but with request that this suggestion be treated as purely non-official for consideration of my Government.

3. Was distressed to find definite evidence subtle propaganda against us by Ispahani and Mahmudabad during recent visits. Consider immediate appointment Ambassador essential in interests future relation between Indiaand Iran and also for protection of interest Indian community consisting Sikh traders.

4. Shall contact Egyptian Ambassador immediately after presentation credentials probably on 13th.

5. Hope to move into Embassy Tuesday but so far have not succeeded in getting house for Chancery. Hotel accommodation not satisfactory. All well.

....

28/7 37

My dear Mukherjee

There is another
ticket - Galsworthy is
not agreeable. So we must
meet again - If it suits
you we can meet at
8-30 or 9 am at your
place tomorrow. Could
you please inform - Rajaji
Rajendra Babu & Pantji ?

Yours

Jawaharlal

27/7 36

My dear Vallabh bhai,

I have just been to Bapu. He felt that Munshi was wholly unsuited for Bengal - Indeed he felt he was even more unsuited for Bengal than for E. Punjab. He based his conclusion on his intimate knowledge of Bengal & Bengalees.

The only name he could suggest was Amrit Kaur's.

Jawaharlal

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SECRET

17 York Road,
New Delhi.

4 August 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I give below the list of names for the new Cabinet which I have sent to the Governor-General:

1. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
2. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
3. Dr. Rajendra Prasad
4. Dr. John Matthai
5. Shri Jagjivan Ram
6. Sardar Baldev Singh
7. Shri C. H. Bhabha
8. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur
9. Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai
10. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
11. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerji
12. Sir Shanmukham Chetty
13. Shri Harbar Vishnu Gadgil

The portfolios have not been mentioned. It is proposed, however, that portfolios with the old members should be retained by them except for a change necessitated by Rajaji's departure.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,
1 Aurangzeb Road,
New Delhi.

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1, Aurangzeb Road,
New Delhi.
The 3rd August, 1947.

Many thanks for your letter of the Ist instant. Our attachment and affection for each other and our comradeship for an unbroken period of nearly 30 years admit of no formalities. My services will be at your disposal, I hope, for the rest of my life and you will have unquestioned loyalty and devotion from me in the cause for which no man in India has sacrificed as much as you have done. Our combination is unbreakable and therein lies our strength. I thank you for the sentiments expressed in your letter.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon'ble Pandit
Jawaharlal Nehru,
17, York Road,
New Delhi.

G.

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17 Aurangzeb Road,
New Delhi.

1 August 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

As formalities have to be observed to some extent, I am writing to invite you to join the new Cabinet. This writing is somewhat superfluous because you are the strongest pillar of the Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,
1 Aurangzeb Road,
New Delhi.

FOOD MEMBER OF CABINET

5th July 1947.

42

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Herewith a letter of resignation from me & another from Sri Jagjivan Ram. When he was leaving for Guwahati he left a paper signed by him submitted that Viceroy when we all resigned. We knew that this would be coming & so he was careful enough to do this.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
INDIA

30.7.43

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have spoken to Auchinleck and he has agreed. He said Law would not give him enough work. I told him he need not worry about that. There will be plenty of work of many kinds to do.

I have also spoken to Raj and he has agreed.

Now you have to attend to Shyama Road and Rajaji Shanmukham.

I have also to speak to

Gabriel & Arnold Kerr.

Yours

Sarah Wyld

The new Cabinet, which will function from August 15th 1947, will consist of the following members. Their portfolios are indicated opposite their names:

Jawaharlal Nehru:	Prime Minister; External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations; Scientific Research.
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel:	Home; Information and Broadcasting; States.
Dr. Rajendra Prasad:	Food and Agriculture.
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad:	Education.
Dr. John Matthai:	Railways and Transport.
Sardar Baldev Singh:	Defence.
Shri Jagjivan Ram :	Labour.
Mr. C.H.Bhabha :	Commerce.
Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai:	Communications.
Rajkumari Amrit Kaur:	Health.
Dr. B.R.Ambedkar :	Law.
Shri R.K.Shanmukham Chetty:	Finance.
Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerji:	Industries and Supplies.
Shri N.V.Gadgil:	Works, Mines and Power.

14th August 1947.

Secret & Personal

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4 King Edward Road,
New Delhi, 4th August 1947.

My dear Panditji,

Thanks for your letter of the 1st instant.

2. I am grateful to you for the appreciation and sentiments expressed in your letter. When I was selected as one of your colleagues in the Interim Government, it was a surprise of my life and I knew that I was dragged much against my will into public life by Sardar Patel. I have not been a politician and I have my own failings, but it has been a matter of great satisfaction to me that I have been able to secure your confidence. I have explained my difficulties to be able to continue in office to Sardar Patel, but as both of you are unwilling to release me I have agreed to shoulder the burden for some time longer. It is needless for me to say that I shall do my best to be of help to you and to render such service to the country as is possible for me.

3. As regards Portfolios, Rajaji had made some suggestions to me, but I think there has been some misunderstanding because it is he who pressed me to

take his Portfolio. I have, however, placed my services unreservedly at your disposal and it is for you to decide what Portfolio should be entrusted to me.

Thank you again for having placed your confidence in me and for your generous appreciation of my services.

Yours sincerely,

Sd. C.H.Bhabha

The Hon'ble
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,
Vice-President,
Interim Government,
New Delhi.

It is proposed to state briefly in this note the problems that face the Interim Government and the steps that may have to be taken for their solution. Neither the problems nor the remedies are to be treated as exhaustive. All that is attempted is only to give a general picture of the problems and their remedies. To understand the true nature of the problems, they will have to be pictured in greater detail and will have to be examined with care and a more concrete shape given to them. There is a danger that no unanimity may reach on the remedies. The Service has got a habit of examining things too pedantically with hair splitting arguments and always deferring the decision. This should be avoided and a commonsense and practical view should be taken of each step and whatever the decision, it should be adopted without delay.

Corruption: This is the first item. It is mostly rampant in the Supply and Industries Department. But no department is free from it. There is a regular racket in Telephone service. Operators are regularly bribed by speculators in all the big towns to get trunk calls promptly and without any payment. The honest person thus cannot get his call even for hours. There is plenty of graft and nepotism also due to so-called planning. There is corruption also in food procurement and also in railways. It is not proposed in this note to give details. They can easily be found from the department concerned.

In the Supply Department these days not much purchasing is done. Disposal of surplus goods, however, offers equally fertile field for corruption and nepotism. In dealing with this evil, the main thing is to create conditions and change administrative methods in a manner as to leave the minimum opportunity for corruption. Efforts should be made to bring about normal conditions as soon as possible. In certain fields it will take time; in others the time is already ripe for creating normal conditions.

First step for this should be the abolition of most of the ordinances and war time controls except those needed to meet scarcity in particular commodities. Judging on the basis of this criterion, no control except of food and cloth should remain. Even

in respect of cloth, only such by-laws and rules should be retained as are necessary for controlling the price of cloth and its distribution. Which by-laws should be retained and which dispensed with is a question needing examination in consultation with business community. At present if the manufacturer wants to make the slightest change in his equipment or working conditions, he has to seek the permission of the Textile Commissioner who employs an army of clerks doing nothing except unproductive work. The whole Textile Control organisation needs thorough overhauling and it should be so simplified as to do away with a complicated machinery with large force of clerks and opportunities for nepotism. Rationing of cloth could not be done away with at present. But its disadvantages should be clearly realised. At present the buyer cannot get the cloth of his choice. A cultivator needing coarse cloth may get very fine muslin while a middle class man needing fine cloth may get something utterly useless for his use. All this is causing inconvenience and discomfort.

A good deal of corruption in the Supply & Industries Department could be eliminated if the sales are made after due publicity and through public auction. There is a danger of a combination being created of the bid holders and knocking down the goods at cheaper price. That possibility is there even now. But by fixing a minimum price its objectionable aspect could be met. In any case, with auction system the Department will be free from corruption and nepotism.

The remedy for eliminating corruption in food procurement plan too should be examined in consultation with such businessmen as have experience in food dealings. It should also be examined whether control on food except on rice, wheat and sugar could not safely be dispensed with. The Capital Issue control could be done away with without any harm. Control of steel, cement, paper etc should be removed.

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This will, undoubtedly, cause certain difficulties and maladjustment in the beginning. But whenever these controls may be removed, some sort of difficulty will have to be faced. But they will

adjust themselves within six months. But these difficulties even when unadjusted will not cause such inconvenience as the present day corrupt administration causes. If the present day corruption continues, Government after some time will be so demoralised that the whole object of the Swarajya Government, that is, raising the moral and material standard of people, would be completely defeated. Therefore, even at some risk, most of the unnecessary controls should be removed while retaining essential ones.

The racket in Telephone could be removed perhaps with less difficulty. It is too well known in the big markets who are the people that employ and bribe these operators. A threat to disconnect their lines if they don't behave will itself have a salutary effect. Besides, the Chief Engineer may be consulted whether it would not be possible to install an automatic recorder to record the number of effective calls each day.

But the chief remedy besides those mentioned above is an increase in the supply of goods all round. If there were more lines of telephone and a reasonable charge even for urgent calls and more supply of wagons, more food and more cloth and more of other goods, most of this corruption will automatically vanish. If the staff is low paid, the pay should be increased.

As I have said, a larger supply (besides removing the opportunities and banishing unnecessary controls) is the chief remedy for creating a cleaner administration. The first item in this direction is the increased supply of food.

Food: It is not fully realised by the country that famine has now become a permanent feature of India. The increase in population from 1931 to 1941 was 18.1 per cent, but production of cereals increased only by 4.6 per cent. The per capita cultivated area has declined from 0.90 acre in 1911 to 0.72 acre in 1941. As the Famine Commission has pointed out "We find it difficult to avoid the conclusion that in 1880 the whole food situation was in certain respects more favourable than the situation with which we are faced to-day."

In spite of an enormous increase in the population, the food

production has not kept apace with the growth in population. While population increased from index of 100 in 1910 to 125 in 1937-38, food production increased only to 110. In earlier days we used to export food grains. Then as the population grew, we started importing which became our regular feature. Now since due to war time conditions we could not import enough, a serious scarcity has been created. How much undernourishment there has been among the masses can be realized when we find that against the nutritional requirements of 2600 calories, they did not have as much as 2000 calories before the war. Now owing to stoppage of imports of foodstuffs the figure has fallen further and we are now in the danger zone. We need 50 per cent increase in foodstuffs production within the next five years. Here is a table giving yield per acre of various food grains in India as compared with Japan and U.S.A. and other countries :

YIELD PER ACRE IN TONS, 1938-1940.

	RICE	WHEAT	SUGARCANE	COTTON
U.S.A.	1.01	0.37	20.03	0.11
Canada	-	0.52	-	-
Australia	-	0.42	-	-
Japan	1.31	-	-	-
Egypt	-	-	-	0.23
Java	-	-	54.91	-
India	0.53	0.32	19.30	0.04

Even if we can achieve what Japan has done, we could have a very large increase in our nutrition. The only thing that can give us immediate results is adequate fertilisers, better ploughing, better seeds and better irrigational facilities.

All the projects of irrigation should be pushed with utmost speed. The old Government already made plans for various projects, but they are all progressing very slowly. They should be expedited. Then we should import and arrange production of agricultural equipments in the country itself. Tractors, if necessary, may be purchased from outside. But we need better kind of ploughs and other better harvesting equipments. They should be manufactured in the country but imported freely until we can produce them ourselves.

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These implements should be sold at a subsidised cost. Fertilisers, for the time being, have to be secured only from foreign countries. We need, for the time being, 5 lacs tons per year. There is lot of controversy in orthodox quarters about the efficacy of fertilisers. The fact remains, however, that most of the Western countries are utilizing fertilisers with good results. The latest opinion seems to be that fertiliser will not deteriorate the soil provided it is used with organic manure. The science has advanced so much and the data and the results of experiments done all over the world so easily available that there should be no difficulty in assessing the correct value of fertiliser. Merely because some person with conservative outlook has condemned fertilisers, we should not be prejudiced against their judicious use. After all, we need 50 per cent increase in our food production within five years and nobody has suggested so far any other better method than using fertiliser. Nobody suggests for a moment that we should get larger production at the expense of the soil. It would be a wrong policy if we get out of the soil better results only at the expense of the future. The choice is not between getting quick results now and serious deterioration in future. What we need is a permanent increase in food production.

The last but not the least is the question of providing better type of seed to the agriculturists. Great progress has been made in cultivation through better seeds of cotton, sugarcane, jute and wheat, but very little has been done so far in respect of seeds of other cereals and lentils. Besides, good seeds are not easily available. In dairy and cattle breeding line we have achieved little except propaganda. This will be slow process, but much could be done in 15 years. We must, however, make a beginning.

Out of the various remedies suggested, some like fertiliser and sale of good seeds etc could be applied immediately. The others are relatively long-term proposals. But all this is possible of achievement within five years. A special mission may be sent to foreign countries to purchase fertilisers. The Government of India decided to manufacture fertilisers in India in 1942 and prevented private enterprise from undertaking this line. The result has been that while private enter-

prise was debarred from doing anything, the Government has not yet reached the production stage. A private enterprise that was started in Travancore is far in advance of the Government of India plans. Whatever be the stage of the Government plans, they should now be pushed with the utmost vigour. Meanwhile, we should arrange to import fertilisers from foreign countries.

Cloth: This is another item needing serious attention. The control in this field should be simple and retained only in respect of price and distribution. The controls on import of machinery, new ventures, floatations and such other activities have only delayed the progress. Allotments of new factories have been made on communal and provincial line and consequently licenses for new factories have been granted to people without money or experience. Most of the factories may never come into existence and thus delay production. To expedite new production, new plants are needed. A special mission for this purpose may be sent to America and England to purchase machinery for early delivery.

But the most important scheme is to manufacture plants in India. Already a factory in Calcutta has started producing spinning machinery. Looms are already produced by the same concern in Gwalior. It is understood that the plan of that concern is to supply complete cotton mill about the end of 1947. It is intended by this concern to expand its activities to an enormous extent. All those planning to produce capital goods should be encouraged so as to obviate the necessity to depend on foreign countries even for ordinary plants.

It is possible to increase cloth production by 50 per cent within five years. It is true this does not offer any immediate relief. But if we did not move here and now, we may not get the desired production even in five years. On the other hand, if properly planned, in 18 months' time production will begin to show an upward tendency and within the next three years the scarcity could be removed. It should be possible thus to remove the cloth controls completely in two years. Until then minimum control in respect of production, prices and distribution will have to be retained. For such a control it is not necessary to employ a big army of clerks and officers who are functioning more for obstruction than for

promoting production. Businessmen, if tackled properly, are ready to help with their experience and co-operation.

General increase in production: It should be borne in mind that the so-called planning during the last four years has functioned for obstructing production rather than for promoting it. In India it is not possible to centralise too much. We have not sufficient talent and capacity to organise nor the political power is so much centralised. We will, therefore, have to drop rigid planning. If we continue the mistake of the last four years, there is not the slightest chance of increasing production. What is needed, therefore, is not rigid planning but creating conditions for increased production. It is neither necessary nor desirable that Government should assume the role of an expert and tell people where they should install their new factories or who should install them. Such things will only create communal jealousies, bitterness and corruption. Against over-concentration, laying down of negatives, that is, barring installation of certain plants in certain areas would be enough. But what is needed is a positive policy. Favourable conditions for promoting production could be created through tariff and tax policy etc. If obstructions are removed from the way, I am sure that the private enterprise will at once take up the new projects and production will go up very quickly.

The argument that without proper planning, the newly created wealth may pass into the hands of a few could easily be met by re-organising the whole taxation structure in a manner as to ensure better distribution of wealth. It should not be forgotten that the private income above a certain level to-day is taxed at a rate of 95 per cent in a rupee. What is needed is discriminatory taxation, that is, very high taxation on personal income, less on joint stock company's income, with this differenciation that where the profit is ploughed back for productive purposes, it will carry favourable rates. Something of this nature is already there, thanks to Sir Archibald Rowlands. Such a policy will direct the earnings into productive channels instead of being utilized for consumption. Special facilities and encouragement should be given to manufacturing of capital goods

in the country itself. In short, the planning should be not very rigid, but only for creating conditions for quick increase in production.

Scarcity of Foreign Exchange: For importing plants and equipments from abroad, we cannot rely on England alone which is fully booked for the next three years. America, on the other hand, is in a position to supply quick delivery. But this raises the question of exchange. We should immediately get out of Dollar Pool and utilize all the favourable trade balance with America for buying American goods. Besides this, we should raise a dollar loan in America, say, of 500 million dollars to be repaid in 15 years. I was told in America that such a loan would be available. We should send a mission abroad for raising such a loan.

Besides sending purchases mission, we should also thoroughly overhaul the offices of High Commissioners and Trade Commissioners in all foreign countries. We need a first-rate man to be the High Commissioner in England. Similarly, our Ambassador in Washington should be a first-rate man. Trade Commissioners all over Europe and America should be better men. They should have a large staff at their disposal. They should keep themselves fully acquainted with the economic and political activities of the countries where they are posted and give the benefit of their knowledge to India. They should also have purchasing department to buy equipments for India. They should also have an organisation at their disposal to employ technicians for India.

Transport: Rail, road, shipping and aviation, all these have to be developed with Indian help. This itself is a great task and organisations have to be created to give a push for expanding all transport facilities. Besides building new railways, we shall have to purchase more wagons and engines for existing lines. Shipping and aviation which is more or less monopolised by non-Indians should be promoted with a nationalist outlook. New roads will create new employment and better facilities for transport.

There are many other problems like housing, education and

health which have to be taken up by the provinces. In respect of education, we should not wait till the Nai Talim Scheme is perfected. We should go ahead with the existing system and make a plan for the next five years fixing our targets.

There is lot to be done in broadcasting in respect of language. Lot of retrenchment could be made which could be utilized for new proposals. A much larger force of officers and clerks is employed in Delhi as compared with pre-war. The work has not increased to that extent. Large sums of money are spent on advertisements for "Grow more food" and "Eat less food". This is all waste of money. These are minor matters, but show the atmosphere.

Labour trouble: The Government should fix wages at all centres in all major industries for various kind of workers. In big towns there should be some sort of standardisation. Similarly, minimum salaries of lower grade clerks should also be fixed in all major towns. After such fixation, neither the employer nor the employee should be allowed to have any change. Every threatened strike must compulsorily be sent to the arbitrators. It should not be forgotten that higher the wages, higher the cost of production and the prices.

Sterling Balances: This needs a settlement between H.M.G. and India. A mission of experienced persons will have to be sent to England to negotiate on the subject.